

UNDERHILL PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, January 18, 2018 6:30 PM

Minutes

Planning Commissioners Present: Chair C. Seybolt, Carolyn Gregson, David Glidden, David Edson, Nancy Bergersen

Staff/Municipal Representatives Present: Andrew Strniste, Planning Director

Others Present: Phil Jacobs, Underhill Resident

[6:25] The Planning Commission convened at Underhill Town Hall at 6:25pm.

[6:33] Chair C. Seybolt called the meeting to order.

[6:33] Chair C. Seybolt advised that prospective Planning Commissioner candidate Valerie Stori obtained a position with the Act 250 volunteer commission, and has therefore withdrawn her interest in the Planning Commission vacancy. **Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to rescind the agenda item pertaining to the interview of Val Stori, and adding an agenda item under new business, which would be to discuss the recruitment for the vacancy.** The motion was made by Commissioner Bergersen and seconded by Commissioner Glidden. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

[6:34] Chair C. Seybolt asked for public comment. No members of the public were present to make public comment.

[6:35] Underhill resident Phil Jacobs was invited to discuss the future of his land in the Underhill Flats Village Center zoning district with the Planning Commission. He explained that in 2004/2006, he began a master planning process that was in collaboration with Jericho, where both municipalities were looking at the future of his and David Villeneuve's land. Mr. Jacobs then proceeded to state that he began to develop his land in accordance with the view that he had mapped out with the Planning Commission (with public discussion and input) twelve or so years ago. He informed the Commission that he subdivided nine lots for single-family dwellings, which is less dense than initially proposed. Mr. Jacobs advised that this was purposely done, as he wanted to continue developing the parcel of land that was the least impactful. He then advised that he was getting to the point where he is going to start developing the open field, which he stated he would like to see more housing that is more clustered and either affordable or senior living. Mr. Jacobs informed the Commission that he has no intention of keeping the property, and he would like to get rid of it as soon as possible, and was now looking at options for the lower field. In response to Chair C. Seybolt's question, he advised that more houses were planned; however, he ultimately decided he did not want to build that many single-family dwellings in that area. Staff Member Strniste then advised topography likely played a role in reducing the number of lots as well, as there is not a lot of flat area, thus requiring a large amount of earth work.

[6:47] Mr. Jacobs advised that the landowners along Min's Lane wanted to buy some of the land in the lower field, thus reducing the number of acres for future development. A brief discussion ensued about connecting Harvest Run with Route 15 directly. Chair C. Seybolt asked what Mr. Jacobs' dream for the remainder of the property was, and he advised that he wanted to see housing for the elderly so they could continue living in Underhill, though he was unsure about a potential layout. He then advised that a portion of the field has stormwater capacity for a 100/200 year storm. Mr. Jacobs informed the Commission that Mr. Clark was willing to have his portion of land immediately adjacent to his land involved in some sort of project. Then Mr. Jacobs stated that he

would like to see some type of recreational/community garden involved. Chair C. Seybolt asked about Cathedral Square being involved in the past, and Mr. Jacobs advised that they had wanted a letter from the Planning Commission stating that they were proponents of a project of similar nature. In addition, Mr. Jacobs advised that the Vermont Housing Trust had a two years waiting period for any involvement. Next Mr. Jacobs advised that from what he has heard, Underhill has a bad reputation for development, as the Town will not allow any type of development to occur. Chair C. Seybolt advised that the Commission seemed to be on board with Mr. Jacobs' vision.

- [6:57] Mr. Jacobs also advised that he wished to keep the railroad track path in place, as it is used frequently, and that it connects with Jericho. He also advised that he wants to promote connectivity to allow for easy pedestrian access, which Chair C. Seybolt informed that that idea would conform with the Town Plan. Mr. Jacobs informed the Commission that the area was approved for 64 units, and that the location of the septic system would be behind 9 Min's Lane, which the property owners are aware of in the event they acquire that land. Staff Member Strniste discussed the feasibility of what Mr. Jacobs proposed, as well as the intensity of the proposed development. Mr. Jacobs informed the Commission that the aesthetics of the project is important to him. Chair C. Seybolt asked what type of housing Mr. Jacobs wanted to see, which he answered some sort of clustered housing. A discussion ensued about a potential health clinic in the area. Mr. Jacobs advised that 30 units was ideal, with the possible inclusion of a central building. Mr. Jacobs informed the Commission that finding a partner to help coordinate the details has been difficult. Staff Member Strniste advised that a master plan could help control the aesthetics of the project, as well as allow the project to be built in phases without having to go back to the Development Review Board. A discussion ensued about affordable housing, both subsidized and free market.
- [7:20] Mr. Jacobs then advised that he is not looking to max out his compensation, and that he is willing make less to make the development look aesthetically pleasing; however, he needs to find someone with the same vision as him. A conversation ensued about how to finance the development and how ownership could play a role in financing. Commissioner Edson and Staff Member Strniste discussed the advantages of having an individual purchasing a lot, constructing the structure, and outright owning the property v. setting up a condominium. Chair C. Seybolt advised that restricting the development to the elderly would be unfortunate, as this could be an opportunity for the younger population as well. Commissioner Edson questioned how much the Planning Commission could do since ultimately the property was privately owned.
- [7:36] Commissioner Bergersen stated that she felt that the Commission was comfortable with what Mr. Jacobs was proposing. Chair C. Seybolt advised that she felt Commissioner Edson was right, and that the Commission's role was limited.
- [7:43] Chair C. Seybolt advised that recapping what happened at the previous meeting with the Development Review Board should be moved to the next meeting when more of the Commission was available.
- [7:44] The Commission agreed that they should reach out to Lea Van Winkle in regards to the Planning Commission vacancy.
- [7:50] Staff Member Strniste advised that he felt the feedback from the Development Review Board was informative; however, felt as if more members from both the Commission and Board were available it would have been even more valuable.

[7:52] Chair C. Seybolt advised that the Commission should break out into focus groups as the next meeting. She also advised that the implementation plan in the Town Plan was very informative, and suggested they send relevant sections of the plan to the Energy Committee and Conservation Commission. Staff Member Strniste advised that meeting with the Energy Committee and Conservation Commission in March would work better than trying to do it in February.

[7:56] **Commissioner Bergersen made a motion to adjourn.** The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gregson and **approved unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted By:

Andrew Strniste, Planning Director

The minutes of the January 18, 2018 meeting were accepted this 1st day of March, 2018.



Cynthia Seybolt, Planning Commission Chair